United Nations

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-sixth Session
Supplement No. 45 (A/56/45)

General Assembly
Official Records
Fifty-sixth Session
Supplement No. 45 (A/56/45)

Report of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

United Nations • New York, 2001

Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

Contents

Chapter		Paragraphs	Page
I.	Introduction	1–9	1
	A. Background	1	1
	B. Organization of work	2–7	1
	C. Documentation	8	2
	D. Structure of the present report	9	2
II.	Progress made in the implementation of the recommendations covering the selected thematic areas	10–33	2
	A. Education for durable peace and sustainable development	11–20	2
	B. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building	21–33	4
III.	Suggestions for further action and measures	34–67	6
	A. Education	35–46	6
	B. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building	47–56	8
	C. Need for follow-up	57–67	10
Annex			
	Documentation and proceedings of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa		12

I. Introduction

A. Background

1. The Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group of the General Assembly, set up by the General Assembly to monitor implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa" (A/52/871-S/1998/318), met for the first time in 2000 and prepared its report (A/55/45), which was debated during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly on 1 November 2000. In resolution 55/217 of 21 December 2000 the General Assembly endorsed the report of the Working Group and extended its mandate until the fifty-sixth session to enable the Group to continue to monitor the implementation of all the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on Africa. The resolution called for a comprehensive follow-up of implementation of the recommendations and the necessity of ensuring efficiency by focusing on selected thematic areas.

B. Organization of work

2. In accordance with its extended mandate, the Working Group met in organizational session on 20 March 2001 under the Chairmanship of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland. In that capacity, Mr. Holkeri designated Mr. Shamshad Ahmad, Permanent Representative of Pakistan, and Mr. Inocencio Arias, Permanent Representative of Spain, as Vice-Chairmen of the Working Group. At the request of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Adviser on Africa was designated as the main coordinator for this Working Group. The representative of Disarmament and Decolonization Organs Servicing Branch of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services was Secretary of the Working Group. The substantive secretariat of the Working Group consisted of representatives of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, and representatives of the Department of Political Affairs and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

3. The Working Group held one organizational and two substantive sessions during the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly: the organizational session was held on 20 March, the first substantive session was held from 29 May to 1 June and the second substantive session from 30 July to 3 August 2001. The Working Group held a total of nine meetings. A number of informal meetings were also held. During the course of its first substantive session, the Working Group held a general exchange of views, heard oral presentations by special representatives of the Secretary-General and representatives of the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations funds and programmes as well as specialized agencies on the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on Africa (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.3 and Add.1). A number of issues papers were also submitted for the consideration of the Group.

4. After extensive consultations and at the suggestion of the Bureau, the Working Group decided to adopt two themes and to focus its discussion on them. The themes selected were as follows:

- Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building;
- Education.

It was also decided to utilize a "hearings" format and interactive dialogue with relevant United Nations system agencies/organizations, regional organizations, Member States and individuals.

5. In order to facilitate its work, the Group had before it a number of background documents, including, an updated matrix on the status of implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report, and the issues papers on the thematic areas of focus of the Group.

6. During the hearings, keynote addresses were delivered by leading organizations involved in the two areas, and these were complemented by presentations by panellists. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Eritrea/Ethiopia, Mr. Joseph Legwaila, delivered a keynote address on the theme of conflict prevention. A message from the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, Dr. Salim Ahmed Salim, was delivered by a representative of the Office of the Permanent Observer Mission of the OAU to the United Nations. Presentations by panellists

on this theme were followed by interactive debate. Some delegations also submitted written statements.

7. Prof. George Eshiwani, Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University (Kenya), President of the Association of African Universities, delivered a keynote address on the theme of education. A number of panellists made presentations on this theme, followed by interactive debate. A number of delegations also delivered written statements. There were also two informal sessions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) on the two themes in order to learn about their work in the field as a contribution to the implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report. Summaries of the outcome of these informal sessions were presented to the Working Group by its two Vice-Chairmen.

C. Documentation

8. In order to facilitate the work of the Group, an updated matrix on the implementation of the recommendations of the report (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.3 and Add.1) together with the issues papers, keynote addresses, papers by panellists and other related documentation on the two themes of discussion were distributed. The summaries of the NGO informal sessions were also distributed. All these documents are listed in the annex to the present report and are posted on the Working Group web site at: http://www.un.org/esa/africa/adhocWg/index.html.

D. Structure of the present report

9. Chapter II of the present report provides an overview of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations relating to the two thematic areas of focus, namely, conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building, and education. It also provides a summary of the major constraints and obstacles faced in the implementation of those recommendations. Chapter III deals with suggestions for further action and measures that can speed up the implementation of the recommendations, including a need for continued and improved monitoring and follow-up. The annex to the present report contains a list of the documentation and a summary of the proceedings of the Working Group.

II. Progress made in the implementation of the recommendations covering the selected thematic areas

10. Considerable progress has been made in the implementation of the recommendations in different areas covered in the Secretary-General's report on Africa. A detailed review of the progress made in these areas is given in conference room paper A/AC/258/CRP.4. A review of the overall progress made will be provided in the Secretary-General's report at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. Some highlights of the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations in the two thematic areas of focus are given below.

A. Education for durable peace and sustainable development

11. The recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on "Investing in human resources" (para. 86) is general and also brief. During the review of implementation of the recommendations, the Working Group elaborated on this recommendation by pulling from the various conferences, including the Dakar Conference on Education for All, the different dimensions and aspects of education deemed critical for African development. In the light of the current reality, the Working Group decided to focus on the role of education in addressing, among other things, the challenges of globalization and poverty eradication; development of technical, vocational and professional skills to respond to the knowledge-based economy and society; employability in a globalized world economy; contribution to science and technology; preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS; preventing and managing conflicts and promoting peace and sustainable development in Africa.

12. Under the education component of the United Nations Special Initiative for Africa (UNSIA), significant progress has been made in addressing the education issue in Africa. UNESCO, UNICEF and the World Bank, in collaboration with UNDP, have developed a strategy to support basic education in the 16 countries with low student enrolment. The World Bank is supporting Education Sector Development Programmes in 15 African countries. Some countries

have already put in place Sector Investment Programmes with the support of UNESCO and the World Bank. These programmes aim to expand access to education, especially at the primary level, improve the quality of education, and increase access of girls to education. The education sector development programmes are being prepared for external funding for additional African countries. The preparatory process of the project has been supported by the Norwegian Trust Fund, African Governments and the United Nations system joint programme on basic education for all (2000-2004).

13. UNICEF, in collaboration with UNESCO, UNIFEM and UNFPA, is supporting the Africa Girls' Education Initiative, which aims to enable more girls to enrol in school programmes and improve their attendance. Similarly, WFP, through its "Take-home rations" programme, provides dry rations to schoolgirls' families in several African countries as a way of compensating the latter for the loss of their daughters' labour. The Secretary-General's 10-year initiative on girls' education announced at the World Education Forum in Dakar reinforces the commitment of the United Nations system to bring coherence and synergy in its ongoing work in this area. The Millennium Declaration as well as the Third United Nations Conference on LDCs have also emphasized the importance of education and that of girls in African development.

14. UNESCO, in partnership with a number of agencies, has been facilitating the establishment of a number of networks, including the African Network of Scientific and Technological Institutions (ANSTI), Regional Information Society Network for Africa (RINAF), and promoting centres of excellence for the development of science and technology capacity. The University-Industry Science Partnership-Africa programme and the International Fund for Technological Development of Africa, established in 1994 by UNESCO, aim to develop and promote endogenous science and technology capacity in the region. UNESCO is also supporting projects in selected African countries on education for a culture of peace, human rights and democracy, as well as communication for peace-building. UNESCO, in collaboration with UNAIDS, has initiated HIV/AIDS preventive education programmes in African countries.

15. Recently, the World Bank has been focusing on building and strengthening human resource capacity in Africa. In this regard, it continues to support, through direct funding, technical assistance and donor coordination, capacity-building of institutions, including the African Economic Research Consortium, the African Capacity-Building Foundation, the African-led Partnership for Capacity-Building, and the Africa Virtual University.

16. In adult literacy, the World Bank has launched, within the context of UNSIA, a programme that aims to increase support for adult literacy in African countries. UNDP is supporting the programme in some African countries, especially targeting at expanding access of girls and women to formal education as well as improving functional literacy to enable them to participate in income-generating activities.

17. Some Member States are sharing with interested African countries their successful experiences and best practices related to increasing access to education and retention of children in school. The programme "Bolsa Escola" initiated by Brazil, for instance, provides inducement in the form of a stipend to families to send their children to school. Brazil is currently cooperating with Mozambique and Sao Tome and Principe to replicate the programme in those countries.

18. While these efforts by the United Nations system, African countries themselves, and the international community are commendable, the Working Group notes with concern that human resource capacity in many African countries remains weak and inadequate to respond to the challenges of the twenty-first century. The persistently low enrolment rates in primary education (77 per cent), and the low school enrolment rates (under 75 per cent) of girls in many African countries leads to a compelling conclusion that the challenge to achieve the agreed international development goals: (i) primary education for all by the year 2015; and (ii) eliminating gender disparities in education by 2005, remains daunting for most African countries. Gender disparities are greatest for Africa compared to other regions of the world. Such low rates of educational enrolments at all levels of education, together with the deterioration in the quality of education can, among other things, undermine economic growth and sustainable development in African countries.

19. Notwithstanding some progress in the area of human resource capacity in Africa, a number of factors constrain the effective implementation of the

recommendation in this area. These include, among others, inadequate financial resources as well as teaching and learning facilities; limited school places in the midst of increasing school age population; weak institutional capacity to deliver high-quality education. In addition, the brain drain from the continent and the HIV/AIDS pandemic are considerably eroding the already limited human resource capacity in Africa. The proliferation of armed conflicts in a large number of African countries and the deviation of resources from development, including the education and health sectors, to military activities impede progress. Donor assistance to education in Africa has also been declining, while external debt servicing continues to divert the limited resources of the affected countries away from development.

20. The incidence of poverty in the region is on the increase and education of children, especially girls, is receiving low priority in resource allocation decisions of households. The escalating number of children left orphans by the AIDS pandemic in Africa, estimated at 12 million, is further impeding progress, as these children, who are often impoverished, ill or alone, drop out of school as they are caring for younger siblings and elderly grandparents.

B. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building

21. The Working Group in the course of its deliberations in 2000 reviewed progress achieved in conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building. In view of a large number of ongoing conflicts in Africa, estimated at 17, the Working Group decided to consider this issue as one of two focus areas in its 2001 meeting.

22. As the updated matrix shows, the United Nations continues to play an important role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts as well as the maintenance of peace in Africa. In this context effective cooperation with regional organizations is important, as they are closer to countries in conflict situation in their respective regions and also in order to avoid duplication of efforts that sometimes could have adverse effect.

23. To address conflicts in Africa, the Secretary-General has used a wide variety of mechanisms, including the appointment of Special Envoys and Representatives. The Special Envoys of the Secretary-General have been appointed to work closely with the regional and subregional organizations and other actors to address the ongoing conflicts, as was the case with the Ethiopia-Eritrea conflict, and the conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi.

24. The establishment by the Secretary-General of an Inter-Agency Task Force for West Africa and the dispatch of a mission to that region in March 2001 is one of the most far-reaching initiatives of the United Nations to develop a coordinated and global approach to conflict prevention. The initiative aims to mobilize various United Nations departments, agencies, funds and programmes to address the multifaceted problems confronting the Mano River Union countries in West Africa. The Inter-Agency Task Force also sought to integrate the efforts of the United Nations with those of ECOWAS. This new approach will focus on analysing the interconnectedness of cross-cutting and cross-border issues, which may threaten peace and security in a region. Such issues include arms flows, the illegal exploitation of strategic natural resources, mass refugee movements, mercenaries and terrorist activities.

25. In his recent report on "Prevention of armed conflict" (A/55/985 and Corr.1-S/2001/574 and Corr.1) submitted to the Security Council and the General Assembly, the Secretary-General has underscored the need to intensify efforts to move from a "culture of reaction to a culture of prevention". The report focuses on the root causes of conflict and the need to develop long-term conflict prevention strategies. Conflict prevention in general and development of effective preventive mechanisms remain a key priority area for the United Nations.

26. A number of United Nations offices have been established in Africa, including in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic and Liberia. These offices are to promote peace and national reconciliation, the strengthening of democratic institutions and governance structures, the harmonization of the United Nations peace-building activities in the field, international support for post-conflict peace-building activities, the facilitation of communications between the Governments of neighbouring countries, the coordination of activities of regional organizations and bilateral donors and the assistance in efforts towards disarmament, the demobilization and the reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian life.

27. Under the framework of United Nations/OAU cooperation, the United Nations collaborates with the OAU in the development of specific capacities in the OAU for conflict prevention, management and resolution. UNDP has also been supporting the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention through a programme including capacity-building of the Conflict Management Centre, development of an early warning and response mechanism and support to the resource mobilization of the Peace Fund. The United Nations also works in close collaboration with subregional organizations, with ECOWAS on conflicts in West Africa, including Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau; with SADC on the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict; and with IGAD on the conflicts in Somalia and the Sudan.

28. Within the framework of cooperation between regional organizations and the United Nations as endorsed by the General Assembly, the European Union is currently undertaking efforts towards a strengthened cooperation with the United Nations in full respect of the Charter as well as in consultations with African countries, in addressing crises and the issue of conflict prevention in Africa. The European Union envisages more intensive exchanges of information, practical cooperation and joint training programmes both for staff at Headquarters and in the field.

29. UNIFEM is providing support to strengthen women's leadership role in the peace process at the regional and interregional level. In this regard, it has established a Women's desk in IGAD to promote a gender perspective in the policy and practice of the organization. As part of its regional peace programme, UNIFEM is supporting a project on African Women for Conflict Resolution and Peace in East, Central and the Horn of Africa. In partnership with various United Nations departments, UNIFEM has supported women's participation in the Burundi peace process. Similarly, in Somalia, UNIFEM in collaboration with UNDP supported Somali women's participation in the National Reconciliation Conference, resulting in Somali women's input in the Charter.

30. The adoption of a Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held from 9 to 20 July 2001, is of particular relevance to this Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group on Africa. This Programme of Action provides an internationally agreed framework for States, the United Nations, other international organizations, non-governmental organizations and civil society to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade of small arms and small weapons in all its aspects. African States facilitated the development and adoption of this Programme of Action through their collective efforts. To this end, the Bamako Declaration on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted by the OAU Ministerial Meeting on 1 December 2000 and endorsed by the OAU Summit in Lusaka, in July 2001, provided a framework to a problem that transcends national and regional boundaries. Subregional initiatives in Africa to further facilitate cooperation to combat illicit small arms proliferation in Africa include the Declaration concerning Firearms, Ammunition and other related Materials in the Southern Africa Development Community and the scheduled adoption of an SADC Protocol in August 2001; the Nairobi Declaration adopted at the Great Lakes and Horn of Africa Conference on the Proliferation of Small Arms and the decision by States Members of the Economic Community of West African States to implement their agreement on a moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of small arms and light weapons in West Africa.

31. ILO, individually or in collaboration with the World Bank, has developed projects in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone and Somalia on the reintegration of demobilized soldiers, with a special emphasis on the most vulnerable groups and child soldiers.

32. FAO's Special Relief Operations Service coordinates emergency agricultural assistance programmes carried out by other United Nations agencies and NGOs.

33. While considerable efforts have been made in the prevention and settlement of conflicts, often they have not brought positive results. The challenges of post-conflict peace-building remain daunting. A number of factors constrain the effective implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report, including, among others, increase in poverty, weak governance, conflicts, human rights abuse, mismanagement of resources, weak institutional capacity, food insecurity, increase in unemployment

and social exclusion, lack of adequate financial resources, lack of timely and swift response to emergency situations.

III. Suggestions for further action and measures

34. Although a number of actions have been taken to implement the recommendations in the two thematic areas of focus, appropriate mechanisms need to be developed to ensure that such action and efforts are continued towards the effective implementation of the recommendations. This will require action at the national, regional and international levels. The Working Group welcomes the leadership efforts of African leaders to develop an African-owned and African-led framework for action towards the sustainable development of the African continent and recommends to the General Assembly to call upon the international community to support the New African Initiative adopted by the OAU in Lusaka in July 2001. Some of the proposed mechanisms as well as related measures are as follows.

A. Education

35. The Working Group considers that education remains central to conflict prevention and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development but notes that access to education at all levels in Africa is low. Unless concerted efforts are made by African countries, together with the international community, time-bound targets of achieving basic education for all and reducing gender disparities will remain elusive. The Working Group encourages the implementation of the Dakar Framework for Action on Education for All and enhanced assistance to African countries in implementing and integrating Education for All into their national development and poverty eradication strategies, including, where appropriate, in sector-wide programmes and their poverty strategy papers. African leaders have demonstrated in the recent New African Initiative their commitment to the Education for All agenda. The Group proposes to the General Assembly to call upon the international community to continue and increase the support for the efforts of African countries in this regard, including for education and the special training needs of girls and demobilized child soldiers.

36. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call on the international community to provide the necessary assistance to African countries to achieve universal primary education, eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on insuring girls full and equal access to and achievement of a basic education of good quality. These should, in particular, be through:

- The consolidation of all education initiatives in Africa;
- Support for innovative ways to accelerate the Education for All agenda as elaborated in the Summit of Heads of State of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Niger and Senegal, held in Bamako, Mali, in November 2000;
- Improvement in the quality of these assistance programmes to education in Africa, taking into account the need for a broad and comprehensive perspective on education to include not only primary, but also higher education, as well as scientific, technical and vocational training;
- Support for the establishment of virtual learning centres in African countries;
- Support for the use of information and communications technology to improve access to education;
- Support for the establishment of regional centres of excellence for science and technology development.

37. The Group welcomes innovative programmes[1] that increase access to education and retention of children in schools through the provision of incentives. Such programmes are currently being introduced and replicated in some African countries. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly invite other countries to share with interested African countries their successful experiences and best practices relating to increasing access to education and call upon the international community, in particular, the developed countries to continue to assist in the implementation and sharing the cost of such programmes.

38. Appreciating the efforts of a number of African countries which have successfully carried out programmes that aim to bolster access of girls to education, the Working Group encourages UNESCO

and other appropriate agencies of the United Nations system to organize regional forums to share such experiences as appropriate. The Working Group recognizes the necessity to facilitate rapid and cost effective development of human capital through increased, innovative and effective use of information and communications technology in training, institutional capacity-building and education, including distance learning, technical, vocational and tertiary education. The Working Group also recognizes that distance learning is an important tool for improving the outreach and a practical solution to increasing access to education at all levels. In this regard, the Group supports the World Bank initiative on the African Virtual University to use information technology for delivering university-level courses to African students. The Group proposes that the General Assembly invite the international community to provide support in establishing virtual learning centres in additional African countries. However, there is a need to develop a concrete programme on distance learning in Africa geared to achieving education for all.

39. The Working Group recognizes the need to develop the skills required by the new knowledge-based world economy and proposes expanded support for Africa's efforts at the promotion of networks of specialized research and higher education, the expansion of subregional capacity programmes and advocacy for regional specialization of academic training in order to maximize synergies and resources.

40. It may be recalled that at the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (held in June 2001), the Assembly emphasized the role of education in preventing the spread of this disease. Given the multisectoral impact of HIV/AIDS, the Working Group calls on all funds, programmes and agencies which have not yet done so to mainstream AIDS prevention into their activities, paying particular attention to building national capacity to develop and implement comprehensive national strategies for HIV/AIDS prevention, care, support and treatment. The Working Group also urges the relevant organizations to assist in building national capacity to tackle malaria, tuberculosis and other major diseases afflicting the region. The Working Group trusts that the Global AIDS Fund announced by the Secretary-General will soon become operational to address the pandemic, particularly in Africa, which is host to 70 per cent of the people infected with the disease worldwide.

41. In view of the enormous challenges facing African countries, especially those in conflict and post-conflict situations and the important role of education in the promotion of peace and sustainable development, African countries need massive resources — domestic and international. Africa's external debt continues to divert its resources from development activities, including education and the other social services. In this regard, the Working Group calls for the full, speedy and effective implementation of the enhanced, heavily indebted poor countries (HIPC) initiative for eligible African countries through new and additional resources as needed, and the adoption by eligible countries of the policy measures required to join the initiative, while stressing the importance of continued flexibility with regard to the eligibility criteria for the enhanced HIPC initiative, in particular, for countries in post-conflict situations. The Working Group calls for strengthened efforts by developed countries to meet as soon as possible the ODA targets of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product (GNP) and the targets of earmarking 0.15 per cent to 0.20 per cent of GNP for the least developed countries, as agreed, and to grant more generous development assistance, including voluntary contributions to core resources of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, to African countries for their sustainable development, in particular, poverty eradication programmes.

42. The Working Group recognizes that resources alone will not increase access to education in Africa. There is a need for sound policies, good governance, capacity-building through the required technical and other support to African countries and accountability in managing resources effectively to increase the impact on education.

43. The educational needs of refugees, displaced persons and those in camps for the demobilized must be addressed as an integral part of peacekeeping and post-conflict peace-building. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly invite the international community, in particular donor countries, to enhance its support for educational activities in emergency situations as well as in post-conflict countries.

44. The Group recognizes the valuable contribution that civil society, including NGOs, makes to education in African countries. In this regard, NGOs and private sector partners, are also encouraged to increase their support for education in African countries.

45. Linking education to income generation is an important strategy towards poverty eradication. This calls for a review of the education curriculum in African countries to respond to the changing needs of society and the economy. The Working Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon relevant United Nations system organizations to assist interested African countries in building their capacity in curriculum development to ensure improvements in the quality of education and access of information and communications technology, including through the facilitation of transfer of technology. The Group proposes support for Africa's effort to accelerate the introduction of information and communications technology in primary schools. South-South and triangular cooperation can be a valuable addition to United Nations efforts.

46. The Working Group trusts that the outcome of the Summit on Children will provide a renewed impetus to the need for concerted action on the education of children, especially that of girls, as well as addressing the issue of child soldiers and the reintegration of the demobilized child soldiers into educational, technical and vocational training institutions and income-generating activities.

B. Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building

47. The Working Group recognizes that conflict prevention and peace-building efforts require a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of conflict and potential conflict, including political, economic and social factors.

48. The Working Group recognizes that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security lies with the Security Council and further recognizes that primary responsibility for successful peace-building and conflict prevention rests with Governments and is predicated on effective cooperation between the concerned national Governments and all international partners, including the United Nations system. Individually and through their regional organizations, African countries are playing an essential part in the prevention of conflict and the maintenance of peace and security in the continent. In this context, the Group commends the efforts of the Organization of African Unity Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution Mechanism, which has undertaken a wide range of measures aimed at conflict prevention, as well as those of ECOWAS, SADC and IGAD in conflict prevention and mediation. The launching of the OAU Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Cooperation in Africa is a commendable initiative aimed at strengthening peace and security in the region. Efforts by the regional and the subregional organizations need to be fully supported by the international community. The Group agrees that to successfully tackle the issue of conflict prevention, it is important to strengthen practical mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations.

49. The Group proposes that the General Assembly call upon the international community to actively support the efforts of those countries in Africa which are leading the efforts to promote regional peace and to resolve conflicts on the continent. Furthermore, the Group proposes the collaboration of civil society with government and regional/subregional organizations in their efforts at the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts.

50. The Working Group recognizes the critical links between peace, democracy, national efforts towards the promotion of good governance, respect for all internationally recognized human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development and sustainable development in Africa. In this regard, the Working Group believes that economic growth supportive of poverty eradication and development should be at the core of conflict-prevention strategies. There should be a coordinated and comprehensive approach by all partners to support such economic growth, reconstruction and recovery, peace-building national efforts in promoting good governance and strengthening the rule of law.

51. While the root causes of conflict are numerous, poverty is invariably present in most of them, often both as the cause and the effect thereof. The Group recognizes that conflict prevention and poverty eradication are closely interlinked and therefore the issue of poverty needs to be addressed in the overall peace process in a comprehensive manner in country specific situations. In this regard, it is critical for Africa to achieve the international development goal of poverty reduction by half by the year 2015. The Group thus proposes that the General Assembly call on the international community, as well as the United Nations

system organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to increase support for African efforts by:

- Taking special measures to address the challenges of poverty eradication and sustainable development in Africa, including debt cancellation, improved market access, enhanced ODA and increased flows of foreign direct investment, as well as transfer of technology;
- Making linkages between the economic and social dimensions of poverty-reduction strategies, and assisting in monitoring and analysis before and after such strategies are produced;
- Promoting economic and social policies that are pro-poor and gender sensitive, including employment and income-generating opportunities for poor people, women and youth through microfinance, community-based development and decentralization, enterprise development, food security plans, adequate nutrition and land tenure;
- Supporting Africa's policies towards job creation, in particular for youth.

52. The Working Group reiterates its call for greater financial support for the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration programmes. The Working Group notes the recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations in paragraph 129 of its report dated 31 July 2001 (A/55/1024). The Group also reiterates its proposal that the funding of such programmes through the regular budget of peacekeeping operations be given adequate consideration as an alternative approach to an effective and permanent solution to the shortfall in resources. Likewise, strengthening the international community's contribution to the development of areas emerging from conflict situations, through funding of small socio-economic projects, but which have great impact among local communities, as experienced by UNMEE in the Ethiopia/Eritrea border, as well as by MONUC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone more recently, can contribute to the consolidation of peace in these regions.

53. The Group welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts to enhance the strategies and mechanisms for peaceful settlement of disputes in Africa. The Group believes that the work of international tribunals, in addition to other measures, is a useful deterrent. In this context, the Group recommends to the General Assembly to call on the international community to provide adequate funding to the Special Court for Sierra Leone to become operational.

54. The Working Group considers that post-conflict peace-building is a vital element and an integral part of conflict prevention. Meeting the challenges of post-conflict peace-building requires a holistic approach and substantial resources. The Group recommends to the General Assembly to call upon the international community to:

- Provide assistance to the United Nations Offices in Africa;
- Assist African countries to build capacity to integrate peace-building activities into their planning and budgetary processes;
- Support efforts of civil society, including women's groups, to work for peace;
- Seek more effective mechanisms to address the issue of illicit trade in natural resources and arms;
- Support efforts to provide assistance in post-conflict rehabilitation, including reconstruction of infrastructure; restoring social services, promoting good governance, including support for an independent judiciary and professional police force, strengthening human resource and institutional capacity and the setting up of public services;
- Support also the promotion of good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems;
- Stress the importance of continued flexibility with regard to the eligibility criteria for the enhanced HIPC initiative, in particular for countries in post-conflict situations.

55. The Working Group also recommends that the General Assembly call upon the Economic and Social Council to focus more on the economic, social and humanitarian dimensions of conflict prevention and peace-building, with a view to improving coordination of activities in these areas, including through contacts between the relevant United Nations intergovernmental bodies.

56. The Working Group recommends that ensuring greater cooperation on issues of conflict prevention and

peace-building, particularly in Africa, should be a priority and focus in the consultations between the Presidents of the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

C. Need for follow-up

57. The review of progress on the two themes of focus shows the need for continued monitoring not only in these but also in other areas. Notwithstanding the enormity of the challenges posed by having to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General, the Working Group has managed to gauge the progress made on a number of fronts and initiated a dialogue on the need to set concrete benchmarks against which further progress can be measured.

58. At the same time, the Working Group gave serious consideration to the issues related to its effective functioning and current format as a body established by the General Assembly to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General. The multiplicity of initiatives and programmes throughout the United Nations system addressing the issues already raised in the report of the Secretary-General, along with the numerous forums in which they are discussed, appraised and reviewed, have given rise to the need to examine the role played by the Working Group and its relationship to such initiatives and programmes.

59. In considering this issue, the Working Group had before it an informal note prepared by the Bureau on a number of possible options for modalities to monitor the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General.

60. After lengthy discussions, the Working Group decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it suspend the activities of the Group during the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. This will allow Member States to take full advantage of the forthcoming review of the UN-NADAF to be held in 2002, to examine the Ministerial Declaration adopted by the High-level segment of the Economic and Social Council on Africa and to appraise the outcome of other important ongoing United Nations initiatives on Africa, all of which should be guided by the principles, objectives and programmes contained in the New African Initiative adopted by African Heads of State and Government during the OAU Summit held in Lusaka, Zambia in July 2001.

61. The Working Group, in making this decision, is of the view that the General Assembly should re-examine the mandate of the Group during the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly and take a decision on the most appropriate way to proceed with the Group and the scope and nature of the tasks that will/may be entrusted to it.

62. At the same time, the Working Group believes that the General Assembly, should it decide to implement the recommendation contained in paragraph 55 above, must continue to monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General through the agenda item entitled "Causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa".

63. In the absence of a report to be forwarded to the Assembly by the Working Group, the discussions under this agenda item should be based on regular reports to be submitted by the Secretary-General, on which such discussions can take place. The Secretary-General is expected, in this regard, to submit a progress report at the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly (see resolution 55/217). The Working Group thus recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit to it a further comprehensive report during its fifty-seventh session on the implementation of the recommendations contained in his report and the concrete measures that are needed to ensure an integrated approach for their full and early implementation.

64. The Working Group is also of the view that for the Secretary-General to be able to present extensive and detailed annual reports to the General Assembly under the above-mentioned agenda item, a formalized structure and permanent focal point must be established within the Secretariat to closely monitor the progress achieved within the United Nations system as it relates to the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General.

65. The Group further recommends that the Assembly request the Secretary-General to designate the Inter-Departmental/Agency Task Force which has already been set up as the permanent focal point within the Secretariat mandated to monitor the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General and entrusted with providing the necessary

inputs for the future reports to be submitted by the Secretary-General to the Assembly. The Working Group also urges the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to ensure that the Inter-Departmental/Agency Task Force be provided with the necessary human, managerial and administrative resources to allow it effectively to discharge its functions.

66. The Working Group is also of the view that the home page of OSCAL on the United Nations web site (www.un.org/esa/africa/adhocWg/index.html) should be constantly updated and strengthened to reflect the measures being taken and progress attained towards the implementation of the recommendations of the report of the Secretary-General. The Group also encourages the Secretariat to provide Member States with updated matrices outlining the current status of implementation of these recommendations.

67. In making these recommendations, the Working Group reaffirms that the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General constitutes a priority that must remain high on the agenda of the United Nations system and Member States. It further reaffirms that the General Assembly, as the chief deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the United Nations, must continue to play the primary role in monitoring the implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General and assessing progress made in addition to the concrete measures that are needed to ensure an integrated approach to their full and early implementation.

Notes

[1] Such as Bolsa Escola, PROGRESSA, and the National Programme on Nutritional Support to Primary Education initiated by the Governments of Brazil, Mexico and India, respectively, as well as other national programmes.

Annex

Documentation and proceedings of the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa

I. Documentation

1. In the course of its work, the Open-ended Ad Hoc Working Group on the Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa had before it the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318);

(b) Report of the Economic and Social Council for 2000 (A/55/3);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General entitled "Development of Africa: implementation of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council and the General Assembly, specifically the implementation and coordinated follow-up by the United Nations system of initiatives on Africa" (A/54/133-E/1999/79);

(d) Progress report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (S/1999/1008, A/54/796);

(e) Draft provisional agenda for the organizational session of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.1);

(f) Mandate of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.2);

(g) Provisional agenda of the organizational session of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/3);

(h) Provisional agenda of the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/4);

(i) Implementation of the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report on Africa (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.3 and Add.1);

(j) Draft programme of work (A/AC.258/CRP.4/Rev.1);

(k) Draft report of the ad hoc working group (A/AC.258/6);

(l) Education for durable peace and sustainable development: issues paper (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.4);

(m) Provisional agenda of the second session of the Ad Hoc Working Group (A/AC.258/5);

(n) Conflict prevention and peace-building: issues paper (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.5);

(o) Development of the United Nations concepts and strategies for conflict prevention and peace-building;

(p) An appraisal of the performance of the Organization of African Unity in conflict prevention and peace-building;

(q) Helping prevent violent conflict: orientations for external partners, OECD/DAC paper;

(r) Summary of the NGO informal session on education;

(s) Summary of the NGO informal session on conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building;

(t) Letter from the President of the General Assembly addressed to Permanent Missions and Permanent Observer Missions to the United Nations dated 11 July 2001.

II. Proceedings of the Ad Hoc Working Group

A. First session

2. The Working Group met in organizational session on 20 March 2001 under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly, Mr. Harri Holkeri of Finland. He opened the first session of the Ad Hoc Working Group and made a statement. Mr. Ibrahim Gambari, Under-Secretary-General and Special Adviser on Africa, also made a statement.

3. The first substantive session of the Working Group was held from 29 May to 1 June 2001. At its 2nd meeting on 29 May 2001, the Working Group adopted the agenda of its first session (A/AC.258/4), which read as follows:

1. Opening of the session.
2. Adoption of the agenda.
3. Organization of work.
4. Thematic discussions on:
   (a) Conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building;
   (b) Education.
5. Other matters.

4. The Working Group focused its deliberations on agenda item 4 (a) and (b). The Group had before it a conference room paper prepared by the Secretariat (A/AC.258/2001/CRP.3 and Add.1), relating to the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Secretary-General's report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318).

5. The 2nd and 3rd meetings (on 29 and 30 May 2001) of the Working Group were devoted to the theme of education. In this regard, an issues paper was introduced by a representative of the Secretariat. The Group heard a keynote address made by Prof. George Eshiwani, Vice-Chancellor of Kenyatta University (Kenya) and President of the Association of African Universities. This was followed by presentations by panellists, including Mr. N. Tidjani-Serpos, Assistant Director General for Africa, UNESCO, Mr. Birger Fredriksen, Sector Director for Human Development, World Bank, and Mr. Rasheed Sadig, Director, Programme Division, UNICEF. The Group also heard a summary of the outcome of the informal NGO session on the theme of education presented to it by its Vice-Chairman, Mr. Inocencio Arias. The members of the Group held a useful interactive dialogue with the speakers and among themselves on the progress achieved in this thematic area and the obstacles encountered, as well as new and innovative ideas and measures for the more effective implementation of the recommendations.

6. The thematic area of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building was taken up at the 4th and 5th meetings (held on 31 May and 1 June 2001) of the Working Group. In this regard, the issues paper was introduced by a representative of the Secretariat. The Working Group heard a keynote address delivered by Mr. Joseph Legwaila, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Eritrea/Ethiopia, and also a message from the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity. It also heard presentations by panellists — Mr. Ibrahima Fall, Assistant Secretary-General, Department for Political Affairs, Ms. Noeleen Heyzer, Executive Director of UNIFEM, Ms. Stephanie Baile, Principal Administrator of OECD/DAC and Ambassador Hirsch of the International Peace Academy. A summary of the deliberations of the informal NGO session on this thematic area were presented to the Group by its Vice-Chairman, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad.

7. The Group held an interactive debate with the speakers and among themselves concerning the achievement of progress, obstacles encountered and ways and measures to implement effectively the recommendations of the Secretary-General's report relating to the area of conflict prevention and post-conflict peace-building.

B. Secon session

8. During its second session, held from 30 July to 3 August 2001, the Working Group devoted most of its time to the consideration of its draft report, as submitted by its Bureau. At its 9th meeting, on 3 August, the Working Group adopted by consensus its report to the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session.

01-46806 (E) 140901